

# Northwest North Carolina Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

Yadkin County Economic Development Strategy

December 2003

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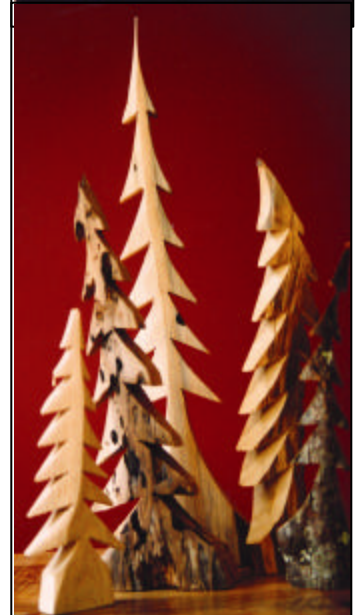
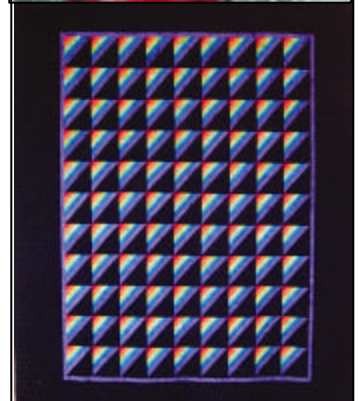
*QUALITY OF LIFE*

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## Introduction

One of Yadkin County's greatest strengths is its leadership. Residents, elected officials and business owners in Yadkin County have rallied to deal with a tremendous amount of economic adversity. A sustained commitment to this continued leadership will be necessary to help the county make up for the job losses that the county has experienced over the past several years.

Yet, there are very basic needs that Yadkin's leadership must embrace. These issues include: improving K-12 education and workforce skills, fostering the growth of the wine industry, and collaborating with cities and counties in the region to meet each other's basic infrastructure needs through interlocal agreements.

The quality of Yadkin County's growth is in the hands of the leadership of the County. By working arm in arm with each other in tackling these tough issues the leadership in the County will take this county to the next phase in its evolution, and reach its potential for economic prosperity.

## Vision

*"Yadkin County's natural beauty, strategic location, dedicated workforce, and infrastructure mix to create great location for business development, tourism, and fine wines."*

## Goals

The economic development strategy contains recommendations that will increase the region's success in growing its target industries and other high impact businesses. AE has identified five goals for each county's economic development efforts. Each goal relates to each section of the ED plan. These goals are the same for each county in the eight-county area. The goals are:

- Goal One: **Workforce development and education** programs are focused on preparing a workforce for Yadkin County's target industries.
- Goal Two: **Entrepreneurship** and small business growth are significant drivers of the economy.
- Goal Three: Yadkin County offers a place for its residents to **live, play, and work**, and County is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by **target industry companies**.
- Goal Four: Yadkin County's **sites and infrastructure** meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.
- Goal Five: Yadkin County is engaged in a proactive, targeted **marketing** campaign to send a clear message that the county is dedicated to these goals and the importance of these strategies to improving the economy.

## **Implementation**

AE recommends that the countywide Chamber of Commerce continue to spearhead economic development initiatives for the county and facilitate further integration of each of the cities within Yadkin County into an overall countywide economic development focus.

The current resource allocation for the county is insufficient. Rather than raising taxes or reallocating funds from existing programs, AE recommends that the County consider alternative funding sources and potentially user taxes (eg., tied to the viticulture industry). These new sources of revenue should be used to attract private sector funding for economic development so that the current resources are more than tripled within 2-3 years. Public/private partnerships are always the most successful economic development groups. The countywide chamber of commerce should be a good mechanism for which to receive additional private support. Look to counties such as Forsyth or Rockingham as models for how to leverage private sector funding for economic development.

One of the first priorities for the county will be to convene a stakeholder meeting to focus on the implementation of this plan. A facilitator should be used for this meeting and the outcome of the meeting should be to gain a consensus on the organizational strategy and resource allocation for implementation.

## **County Priorities**

This plan is a roadmap for Yadkin County to use that will lead the county to a sustained healthy economy. However, when resources are scarce within the county or at the state and federal level, the following prioritized project list will assist the county in directing resources to the most critical needs and to areas that will have the biggest impact in the county:

**Infrastructure to Hwy 421 / I77 Intersection.** This intersection is a very visible and potentially lucrative intersection, but no water or wastewater utility infrastructure currently exists to this site. Yadkin County, along with other municipalities, has undertaken a preliminary engineering study to determine feasibility and cost. If infrastructure were available to this site, private development could impact several counties in the region, creating job opportunities and increasing sales and property tax revenues. In addition to the utility needs, some additional assistance with modifications of the road interchanges to support the business growth may also be necessary, but these needs are not yet identified.

*Funding: \$5 million. Potential funding sources include: EPA, USDA, EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, Foundations*

*Timing: Begin securing funding in 2004/5. Solicit developer interest and feedback on potential projects in that area, with the support and participation of landowners in 2004/5, and look to provide infrastructure in 2005/6*

### **Improve K-12 facilities**

Yadkin County schools currently have twenty-nine mobile classroom units and two mobile bathroom units. Schools are overcrowded and outdated. A school bond referendum failed recently that was for constructing two new high schools. However, a new effort is underway that appears to have more support. This effort would be to obtain funds for the construction of two new middle schools. **This bond needs to pass.** Schools should be the

number one priority for any county, but particularly for Yadkin County, who desperately needs to better prepare the youth for tomorrow's job opportunities. If County Commissioners cannot support a bond referendum, then they should pursue a Certificate of Participation that would allow the county to obtain the funds for construction without getting voter approval. Several neighboring counties, including Wilkes and Ashe counties have obtained school construction funds through this finance mechanism.

*Funding: \$20,000,000. Potential funding source include: County Bond, Certificate of Participation, EDA, Golden Leaf, NCDOC*

*Timing: Begin construction in 2005*

**Expand the Yadkin Center, Surry Community College.**

Yadkin County recently opened this community college and participation has been excellent. Land is available at the site where the College can expand. A feasibility study needs to be developed (including architectural and structural drawings developed) to determine a cost and purpose for this expansion. AE recommends that a state-of the art business incubator, including youth entrepreneurship center be developed, in conjunction with additional classrooms.

*Funding: \$175,000 (feasibility study). Potential funding source include: EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, NC Department of Education, Other foundations, Other state or federal. An estimate for the construction is \$2.5 million.*

*Timing: Secure funding for the feasibility study in 2004/5. Secure funding for development in 2005/6.*

## ***WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES***

**GOAL: Workforce development and education programs are focused on preparing a workforce for Yadkin County's target industries.**

Yadkin County has made significant progress in Community College infrastructure and program development over the last several years, with the opening of the Yadkin Center, the satellite campus of Surry Community College. Already within less than one year of existence several of their programs (including trucking) are receiving high praise from students and business participants.

The K-12 Education system in Yadkin County, however is in need of assistance. Although the school ratings have not changed significantly, the overcrowding of the schools will be an impediment to business and residential growth.

However, there still remain several areas that the county can focus on to address the changing economy and the job losses that the county has experienced over the past few years. The following are the most critical areas for Yadkin County to focus workforce and education efforts:

- **Ensure K-12 Education is as strong as possible.**
- **Improve adult education for workers in transition**
- **Adopt and enhance programs at Yadkin Center - Surry Community College that create workers to supply target industries**
- **Develop workforce training programs geared towards Hispanic population.**

**Workforce Strategy 1: Ensure K-12 education is as strong as possible.**

Basic education should be considered the foundation of successful economic development. Those regions across the U.S. who have invested in basic education are also the most successful in growing high tech, high wage employers. The two go hand in hand. Northwest North Carolina has suffered significant job lay offs and economic decline in the past decade. Before an aggressive external economic development campaign is launched, it is essential that all NWNC counties invest in the core of their communities: K-12 education, the revitalization of their downtowns, and infrastructure that supports new economy businesses. This investment will have much greater pay off long term by helping each county retain its current employers and high skilled workers, as well as renew a positive spirit across the community. Businesses in the target industries that have been recommended by AE demand that the best possible K-12 education system and workforce training programs are in place that are preparing the workforce to succeed in targeted industry businesses. This ensures that they will be able to recruit and retain young professionals who demand that their children receive excellent education. It also shows them that the community is willing to invest in itself, its future, and therefore will support them into the future.

The following chart shows the current technological training offered through the high schools in Yadkin County:

County and Name of School	Vocational Program (K-12)					
	Agriculture	Business Education	Family and Consumer Sciences	Health Occupation Education	Techonology Education	Trade and Industrial Education
Yadkin						
Forbush HS	X	X	X	X	X	X
Starmount HS	X	X	X	X	X	X

**Action 1: Adopt School Bond Referendum**

Yadkin County schools currently have 29 mobile classroom units and two mobile bathroom units. Schools are overcrowded and outdated. A school bond referendum failed recently that was for constructing two new high schools. However, a new effort is underway that appears to have more support. This effort would be to obtain funds for the construction of two new middle schools. This bond needs to pass. Schools should be the number one priority for any county, but particularly for Yadkin County, who desperately needs to better prepare the youth for tomorrow’s job opportunities. If County Commissioners cannot support a bond referendum, then they should pursue a Certificate of Participation that would allow the county to obtain the funds for construction. Several neighboring counties, including Wilkes and Ashe counties have obtained school construction funds through this finance mechanism.

Points to consider regarding a school bond referendum include:

Organize Your Teams

- Create a countywide task force that regularly meet and reach consensus

- *School district reps, county and city officials, parents' groups, ED officials, teachers*
- *Convene school-by-school volunteer groups that regularly meet*
- *Task forces' 1<sup>st</sup> assignment is to create an action plan and timeline*
- *School principals convene parents' groups (e.g, PTA, Boosters)*

### Develop your message

- *Develop an impactful, snazzy audio-visual presentation for campaign materials*
- *Present to Yadkin County power players*
- *Present to county "clubs" (Kiwanis, Rotary, Lion's)*
- *Develop "flyers" for public spaces across the county*
- *Intensify the campaign in final 3 weeks*
- *Be consistent*
- *Everyone uses same speaking points, overall message*
- *Same professional graphics, "logo," slogan*
- *Easy to understand*
- *Be honest*

### Aspects of Successful Campaigns

- *Are founded in good research*
- *Are well planned and carefully timed*
- *Occur in an atmosphere of open communication*
- *Are organized by school attendance areas*
- *Utilize principals as key communicators*
- *Use clear and concise messages*
- *Inform but do not threaten about the likely results of failure*
- *Focus on benefits not dollars*

### As with any good campaign:

- *Concentrate on your "yes" and "undecided" voters.*
- *Get them out to vote!*
- *Don't waste time or resources trying to sway the "no" voters...*
  - *it's unlikely they will change their minds.*
- *Arguments should occur behind the scenes, not in the public's eye.*

*Funding: \$20,000,000. Potential funding source include: County Bond, Certificate of Participation, EDA, Golden Leaf, NCDOC*

*Timing: Begin construction in 2005*

### **Action 2: Inform students, teachers, and parents of post-graduation options other than college. These programs will help keep graduates in the county, fill workforce needs and keep students from dropping out of high school.**

- *Early in high school, identify students who may be interested in a different track other than college. A good example is the Mountain Empire Community College's Talent Search Program. This program helps 12-18 year old students from low-income families define career and educational goals. It is designed to keep students on track throughout their education.*

Students work with educators to monitor their progress and stay focused on long-term goals.

- Track these students into apprenticeship programs for occupations that are growing but currently not being pursued (construction trades such as plumbing and electrical installation, for example).
- Over time, develop a Web site and printed information package containing resources for non-university bound youth. The Web site and package should contain information about non-college options, links with training organizations, apprenticeship programs, and the community college. The Web site could also contain job postings.
- Establish General Prep and Vocational Prep courses of study in all high schools.
- Promote the resources of the Community College in all high schools.

*Funding: To be determined; Possible sources: Golden Leaf*

*Timing: Work should begin in 2004. New school programs will take 3-4 years to initiate.*

### **Action 3: Invest in technological infrastructure within schools.**

- To bolster economic development, all school systems should be cutting edge and nationally competitive. Look at innovative programs such as the Center for Advanced Research and Technology in the Fresno and Clovis Unified School Districts in California as a prime example of the future face of education. [www.CART.org](http://www.CART.org)
- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation recently awarded to the State of North Carolina an \$11 million grant. This is the first part of North Carolina's \$30 million initiative to create more than 40 redesigned high schools throughout the state. Yadkin County should attempt to be a recipient of a portion of these funds.
- Invite student teams to help school officials brainstorm about how to use new school bond revenue. Students can, for example, envision what an ideal computer laboratory would look like. This will help school officials plan facilities that are tuned into student needs while empowering students.
- Adopt a take home computer program. In this program, schools lend computers to parents for 4-6 weeks at a time. To be eligible for the program, parents are required to take an orientation workshop that teaches them the basics of operating a computer, common software packages, and using the Internet.
- Over time, create W-FI networks on the Community College and all high school campuses.
- Evaluate arts programs and classes in K-12 education. Incorporate design-oriented activities into these programs. For example, arts training for elementary school children could include a segment on the rules of good design. As children progress through school, introduce computer-aided design, graphic design, and animation, for example.

### **Action 4: Develop Adopt-A-School Programs in every school in Yadkin County.**

Develop a model program for every school to support and use. Consider developing a program that could be replicated. The following is a description on the

Austin Independent School District's Partners in Education Program. A similar type of program has been developed within W-S, and with the help of the Chamber of Commerce could be expanded and then replicated as a model to use throughout the region.

Austin Partners in Education is a collaborative effort between AISD and the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce. It encourages cooperative business and community involvement in public schools to enhance the quality of education for Austin students. Its mission is to create and foster effective community partnerships that support and enrich student learning and success. Partners are matched with the school or AISD program of their choice and provide volunteer services, in-kind contributions and cash donations. The program is campus-based. AISD central office staff and the Chamber of Commerce facilitate the program and support the campus representatives. Schools consult their Campus Improvement Plans (CIPs), conduct needs assessments and develop Partner Plans to guide their partners' efforts.

The program changed its name in 1988 to Austin Partners in Education. During 1998-99, Austin Partners in Education consisted of 363 Partners and 1,774 Friends. Partners are organizations committed to a consistent, sustained relationship with a school or district program. Friends provide direct support or service to a school or district program through one-time or occasional offerings of assistance. In its 16-year history, Partners in Education provided more than \$52 million in donations of time and financial resources to AISD schools. In 1998-99, the program generated about \$7 million in contributed resources, a \$90-per-student return on investment versus a cost of \$5 per student.

*Funding: To be determined. Possible funding sources include: the Bill Gates Foundation Grant and State of North Carolina (mostly private sector support and volunteers)*

*Timing: 2004*

### **Workforce Strategy 2: Adopt programs that improve adult education for workers in transition that have not received a high school degree or who need to update their skills to prepare for new job opportunities.**

Workforce training programs need to be holistic, encompassing not just formal education and skill development but also healthcare, affordable housing, transportation, daycare, and a monthly stipend. To effectively transition displaced workers into target industries, coordinating workforce development programs with these other types of services will yield the most positive results.

#### **Action 1: Examine initiatives of other communities for ideas on innovative new programs for Yadkin County. Good examples include:**

- Project QUEST in San Antonio
- STRIVE in Baltimore
- HOPE in Detroit
- **Danville Community College in Kentucky.** After a careful assessment of who utilized the college and who did not, Danville Community College

established four Neighborhood Educational Opportunity centers that provide GED, computer literacy, and continuing education courses for underserved populations. Through the centers, residents have access to education, job training and placement, neighborhood revitalization work, economic development assistance, and leadership development activities for youth and adults.

- **Southeastern Community College (SCC) in Whiteville, North Carolina.** SCC in collaboration with the Columbus County Partnership for Children, Columbus County Schools, and Four County Community Services offers a Family Literacy Program. In this program, parents and children go to school together. Parents can improve upon their own basic education skills and then actively participate in teaching their children.

### **Action 2: Seek funding for program development**

- Although there are some federal and state funds to support some of this, philanthropic funds would be more flexible to use. The most successful programs (such as HOPE) are community-based approaches.

### **Action 3: Inform the community that these programs are available.**

Encourage people in need to participate, and ensure that all leadership and economic development professionals fully understand the new workforce program delivery at all levels so that they can talk intelligently about these programs in their business development and expansion efforts.

- Include a brief discussion of how a community-wide informational program is needed to funnel these, often hesitant, older workers into new vocational programs. The reason they have not worked in the past is because these workers were forced back into a traditional educational environment in which they did not feel comfortable.
- Include details about where and how to distribute information throughout the community (e.g. libraries, churches, chambers, employers, local media).

*Funding: To be determined. TBD (after program proposal has been developed)*

*Timing: Begin in 2004*

**Workforce Strategy 3: Adopt and enhance programs at Yadkin Center-Surry Community College that create workers to supply target industries.**

The following chart illustrates the skills that are currently being addressed and that need to be developed at the Yadkin Center-Surry Community College to develop a workforce for the targeted industries recommended by AE to Yadkin:

	Target Industries						
	Logistics, Distribution	Design	Materials	Transportation Equipment	Food Processing	Value-Added Agriculture	Hospitality
<b>Surry Community College, Yadkin Campus</b>							
Advertising and Graphic Design (A)		◦					
Agribusiness Technology (A,D,C)						◦	
Automotive Systems Tech (A,D,C)				◦			
Electrical Engineering Tech (A,D)	◦						
Enology (A,D,C)						◦	
Horticulture (A,D)						◦	
Industrial Systems Tech (A,D,C)			◦	◦	◦		
Livestock and Poultry Tech (A,D)						◦	
Machining Technology (A,D,C)	◦		◦	◦	◦		
Mechanical Drafting Tech (A,D)	◦		◦	◦	◦		
Viticulture (A,D,C)						◦	
Welding Technology (D,C)				◦			

\*A-Associate's Degree; D-Diploma; C-Certificate

**Action 1: Educate Yadkin Center-Surry Community College about target industry workforce needs.**

- Provide CC leaders information on the target industries, such as the types of businesses within these industries, specific training needs that these businesses will need.
- Seek existing target industry businesses within the County to express their interest in these programs.

*Funding:* \$NA  
*Timeline:* Immediate

**Action 2: Enhance workforce training for the health care industry.**

Education and training is in place that is geared towards the health care industry. The primary hurdle to overcome in this area is that a nursing certificate generally requires a two-year curriculum commitment, and that is only after students meet the minimum requirements. Yadkin Center-Surry Community College should ensure that their programs are not just geared towards nursing and similar fields, but also for assisted living.

- The medical transcription program is a model program that could be expanded. Seek businesses within Yadkin County who may take advantage of these workers so that graduates of this program can work within the county.

*Funding:* \$TBD  
*Timeline:* Begin in 2004

**Action 3: Market the Community College**

- Improve signage throughout the County
- Submit applications to present at national conferences on workforce training and entrepreneurship

*Funding:* \$TBD  
*Timeline:* Begin in 2004

**Action 4: Expand CC programs to meet existing and future business needs (private sector driven training)**

- Seek input from major businesses within county about their existing and future needs.
- Seek resources from businesses to help support training programs.

Funding: \$TBD

Timeline: Immediate

**Action 5: Economic Development groups and Yadkin Center-Surry Community College should become familiar with target industry skill requirements in further developing programs to meet current and future needs.**

- Hold quarterly workshops with Community College Leaders to develop regional strategic plans geared towards this initiative.
- Build programs that train people and position Yadkin County for the hospitality industry. Yadkin County has numerous tourist attractions, major annual festivals, and historic downtowns. The number of tourists coming to the Region is expected to climb as Yadkin County begins to better package and promote its tourism assets and the Yadkin Valley viticulture region brand becomes more widely recognized. In examining the Community Colleges and other workforce programs in the county, it is evident that potential hospitality workers have few options for training. The hospitality industry offers a good short- to medium-term solution for displaced workers, because training takes a short amount of time and jobs will quickly emerge in Yadkin County.

**Workforce Strategy 4: Develop workforce-training programs for Hispanic population.**

Yadkin County has seen an increase in Hispanic population during the past decade. The Hispanic population in Northwest North Carolina will continue to rise. Migrant workers are typically undercounted by the Census, which may mean that the Hispanic population in Yadkin County is actually much larger.

It is important that all Northwest North Carolina communities have programs in place that assist Hispanics in learning English, obtaining job training, job placement, and saving money in local banking institutions. Along with this, it is important that non-Hispanic residents learn about the Hispanic culture so that incoming residents feel welcome and engaged in the community.

**Action 1: Continue to support English as a Second Language (ESL) programs.**

- ESL classes should be made available throughout the community to provide greatest access to all Hispanic and non-English speaking residents. The Workforce Development Center, local public school facilities, and churches provide accessible locations at little cost to the community.

**Action 2: Widely promote the availability and value of these programs.**

- A recent study shows that Hispanic residents tend to respond best to radio advertisements and word-of-mouth communication.

- Launch a countywide program to educate Hispanic residents about the options available to them, including ESL, other educational opportunities, and banking services. The program will involve a mix of public service announcements (PSAs), billboards, and flyers distributed at churches, restaurants, and other gathering places. Promotional materials should be in Spanish.

### **Action 3: Develop cultural awareness programs for all residents and businesses.**

- Make learning about the Hispanic culture fun. Invite leaders from the Hispanic community within Yadkin County, to co-organize a Mexican-American event featuring cuisine, traditions, and artwork.
- Work with local banks to become more flexible to the needs of Hispanic workers. Provide information on banking in Spanish. Be more flexible on the type of identification required to open a savings account.

*Funding: Funding depends on the size of the event. Funding should come from sponsorships from local businesses and media organizations.*

*Timing: The first event should be held in 2005.*

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP STRATEGIES**

**GOAL: Entrepreneurship and small business growth are significant drivers of the economy.**

A critical aspect of building sustainable economic competitiveness is linking economic performance with social cohesion. The NWNC region is very diverse in terms of education, workforce skills and natural features yet the region must strive to reduce economic disparities among the counties. The stimulation of entrepreneurship through the formation and development of new commercial businesses and social enterprises can play a key role in employing underutilized resources in the distressed areas of the region and reducing this disparity.

The entrepreneur in the community is a primary contributor and mobilizer of resources to develop the economy, a provider of employment for others, and a stabilizing factor in the society. **The following are some of the major benefits of entrepreneurship:**

- ✓ Provide a productive outlet for energies of enterprising and energetic people
- ✓ Creation of jobs at relatively low capital cost, especially in the fast growing service sector.
- ✓ Development of a pool of skilled and semi skilled workers who are the base for industrial expansion
- ✓ Small businesses are a source of innovation in products, services and techniques
- ✓ Contributing to increased participation of all communities in the economic activities of the region.
- ✓ Serve a social function by creating career opportunities and upward social mobility, and by preserving, in many instances, a set of values increasingly needed in these days of large impersonal firm

### *Where is the opportunity?*

Several entities currently provide services for entrepreneurship within the NWNC region with programs ranging from training, technical assistance, funding, and networking. Although there are numerous groups providing an aspect of entrepreneur development, the most overarching organizations in the region are the **Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative (TEI)**, serving Forsyth, Davie, Yadkin, Yadkin, Stokes, and Rockingham Counties, and the **Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council (BREC)**, serving Western North Carolina and including Yadkin and Ashe counties.

TEI's primary mission is to promote economic development in the North Carolina Piedmont Triad region by fostering the start-up and success of high-growth companies. The Winston-Salem Alliance along with Action Greensboro fund the Triad Entrepreneurial Initiative with a focus on creating high-growth companies in the North Carolina Piedmont Triad region. Although most of the focus for this fledgling organization is within the immediate W-S/Greensboro/High Point MSA, a regional entrepreneurship program could be incorporated into their workplan after a few more years of success in the metropolitan area.

BREC is a nurturing organization for entrepreneurs in Western North Carolina, creating homegrown jobs and growing the region's economy. BREC supports entrepreneurs through the following four focus areas: education, mentoring and networking,

communications and capital formation. BREC meets monthly, and provides quarterly opportunities for qualified entrepreneurial businesses to present plans before a group of local investors, the Blue Ridge Angel Investors Network.

The following are the most critical areas for Yadkin County to focus entrepreneurial efforts:

- **Educate local population about entrepreneurship and what is required to open a business.**
- **Better connect venture capital and angel investors across the region with Yadkin County Entrepreneurs**

**Entrepreneurship Strategy One: Provide residents in Yadkin County with innovative educational resources to help them learn about entrepreneurship and start new businesses.**

In the future, entrepreneurship will be responsible for more than 70 percent of economic development in the U.S. As manufacturing jobs continue to be lost to overseas competition, the U.S. economy will be driven by small businesses. It is critical, therefore, to be preparing today's workforce for a future where they create their own jobs, rather than expect a job with a large employer to be waiting for them when they graduate or transition into a new career.

**Action 1: Think entrepreneurially in all K-12 school programming and investment.**

Seven out of ten high school students want to start their own businesses, according to the first national Gallup poll on entrepreneurship education commissioned and co-developed by the Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership (CEL) of the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation [1994]. Young people no longer believe that corporate America will take care of them. Today's high school students watched their parents invest years of hard work and loyalty in companies that promised job growth and security in return. These same youngsters are observing in dismay as corporation after corporation downsizes its workforce and drastically abandons the assumptions that used to constitute the unwritten contract between the long-term employee and the corporate employer.

- **Start a school mentor program or Junior Achievement program in every junior high and high school in Yadkin County.** This program will invite local business owners to talk to students about why they started their own business, what they enjoy about it, and how they did it.
- **Develop a youth leadership training program in 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> grade for every high school in Yadkin County.** Look to the John Ben Sheppard Institute, Fort Bend County (Texas) or the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA, utility company in Austin, Texas) as model programs for youth leadership.
- **Support an annual business plan competition for all high school students in Yadkin County.** Invite local business leaders to conduct business plan instruction each fall semester. In the spring, launch a

competition in which students conceive of a business idea and submit an executive summary of a business plan. Winners should receive college scholarships or seed capital. Invite previous year's winners to become mentors and judges in the competition. TEI should lead this initiative.

- **Start a summer entrepreneurship training program for teachers.** Ask leaders at TEI, Community Colleges, and private businesses to lead a 1 day seminar for teachers to provide them with tools they can use in their own classrooms to train students on entrepreneurship.

*Funding:* To be determined. Mentoring, Junior Achievement, and internship programs rely on volunteer time. The business plan competition should rely on local donations. The amount of scholarship awards or start-up capital could range from \$500 per student to thousands of dollars.

*Timing:* Several of these recommendations have already started. All initiatives that are not currently underway should start by 2004.

### **Entrepreneurship Strategy Two: Better connect venture capital, angel investors, and entrepreneurs within Yadkin County.**

Funding for business startup is also one of the biggest impediments to furthering entrepreneurship Yadkin County. The Piedmont Angel Network is one of the only angel investor groups in the Piedmont Triad region, yet seems to be under funded to be able to have a large impact on entrepreneurship development throughout the region. According to a recent article by Erik Pages and Shari Garmise in the *Economic Development Journal*, "networks are a central component of an entrepreneurial climate – a cultural, social, and economic milieu that encourages and nurtures the creation of new business ventures." The objective of an entrepreneurial network is to provide a forum in which business executives and people who seek to become executives of their own companies can share ideas, do business together, and build relationships.

#### **Action 1: Broaden the Triad Entrepreneur Initiative to a Regional scope**

- Promote membership to small business owners, aspiring entrepreneurs, professional service providers, local civic leaders, economic developers, and investors.
- Offer memberships at a low annual cost (less than \$200).
- Ask the Chamber of Commerce, county and city government, local libraries, churches, and other community organizations to post flyers and online announcements about the foundation of the Association and the date/time of the first networking event.
- Examine the Council for Entrepreneurial Development at Research Triangle Park ([www.cednc.org](http://www.cednc.org)) as a good example program and statewide resources for entrepreneurs.
- Look at the newly formed Rural Entrepreneurship Program (<http://www.ncruralcenter.org/entrepreneurship/about.asp>)

#### **Action 3: Host a monthly Entrepreneurs' Association event.**

- The event should include 30 minutes of networking time and a 30 minute educational presentation.

- Speakers for the event could include: successful entrepreneurs from Yadkin County, venture and angel capitalists, representatives from the SBDC (and SBTDC) and business incubator, instructors from Community Colleges' recommended entrepreneurship class.

**Action 5: Host a one-day entrepreneurial education workshop in conjunction with the SBDC and Community Colleges.**

- The workshop should occur every six months.
- Present topics such as how to write a business plan, small business finance, and marketing.

**Action 5: Develop a Regional Entrepreneurs' Association.**

- Action Greensboro and Winston-Salem Alliance are already funding the TEI with similar large contributions. This type of regional collaboration towards entrepreneurship is an excellent start.
- Seek assistance of the newly formed NC Rural Entrepreneurship Initiative

*Funding: Charge members a small admission price to attend monthly networking events (to cover the cost of the facility and refreshments), but obtain private funding to support association events during first year.*

*Timing: Begin forming the Association in early 2004. The first networking event should be held in Q2 or Q3 2004. The Web site should be on-line by Q4 2004.*

## **QUALITY OF LIFE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL: Yadkin County is an appealing place to live for young professionals and individuals employed by target industry companies.**

The most successful economic development regions in the U.S. also contain strong quality of life amenities. In addition to quality education, a quality environment plays a large part in the choice of young, skilled professionals in where they move. It also plays a significant role in retaining good citizens.

A high quality of life is also directly connected to Yadkin County's ability to attract tourists. **Through the choice of investments in quality of life amenities, Yadkin County will be able to target the specific type of tourist that visits.** Tourists should be considered an economic development audience. Oftentimes, tourists are the very decision makers around which economic development campaigns are targeted. To get the highest return, economic development and tourism promotions should be closely connected. The audience of both should overlap.

One of the easiest ways for NWNC to become top of mind for its target industries is for executives from those industries to visit Yadkin County for vacation. Therefore, tourist activities should portray a certain image of the county, one that is appealing to those executives and other decision makers. Make sure all tourist attractions showcase the county's creativity, natural beauty, and unique lifestyle.

The recommendations offered within this section are aimed at improving the quality of life for two audiences: young professionals and target industry companies. As addressed in the Workforce Development recommendations, both audiences look for cities with high performing primary and secondary schools. Both groups are also attracted to locations with good healthcare, quality housing, safety, ample parks and green space, artistic and cultural amenities, vibrant downtowns (any size), and environmental cleanliness.

From the urban culture of Forsyth County to the scenic beauty and mountainous terrain of more rural counties, NWNC contains many qualities that will be appealing to young professionals. Future marketing efforts, for example, could be aimed at attracting younger tourists to Yadkin County by promoting Yadkin Valley wineries or by promoting the county and region's tremendous outdoor recreation opportunities, and accessibility to the other areas in the southeast.

Retaining young professionals is as important as recruiting them. In this section, we recommend improvements to existing quality of life features and the creation of new amenities that will show Yadkin County's young families that Yadkin County is progressive and paying attention to their needs. The projects we recommend are designed to generate a new energy in the county that appeals to a younger population.

The following are the quality of life strategies that we recommend for Yadkin County:

- **Foster an Environment to Take Advantage of Yadkin Valley Viticulture Region**

- **Expand parks and recreation, preserve green space and improve trail connectivity.**
- **Become nationally known as a center for fine craft and design.**
- **Invest in the redevelopment and beautification of downtowns**
- **Support / expand healthcare facilities.**

Specific activities to support each of the above strategies are provided in the following sections.

### **Quality of Life Strategy One: Foster an Environment to Take Advantage of Yadkin Valley Viticulture Region**

One of the greatest opportunities that Yadkin County has is its fledgling wine industry. How will the wine industry benefit Yadkin County? The wine industry will thrive as much as the county allows it to thrive. Learn from the experience of others, and consider some of this information from the NAPA Valley (from [www.napavintners.com](http://www.napavintners.com)):

- “While it may appear to the casual observer that Napa County is bursting with grapevines, the truth is that **only nine percent of Napa County is planted in vineyards** and less than three percent remains suitable for grape planting, according to the findings of the Napa County Watershed Task Force.
- Our reputation in the world of wine is huge, yet **Napa Valley accounts for only four percent of California's total wine production.**
- **Napa Valley accounts for only five percent of total United States vineyard acreage.**
- Local landowners have placed a total of 11,000 acres of agricultural land in the Land Trust of Napa County, ensuring their land will never be developed. Another 16,000 acres are protected under the Williamson Act, a program that provides incentives to keep land in agriculture production and open space.
- The Napa Valley Wine Auction, first held in 1981, is the world's most successful wine charity event with all of the proceeds staying within Napa County, **donating almost \$50 million to Napa County health care, youth development and affordable housing organizations over the past 23 years.**
- Napa Valley's wine industry accounts for \$4 billion of California's annual \$33 billion economic impact from winemaking and related industries.
- The familiar statue on Highway 29 that greets those who enter Napa County from the south is called *The Grapecrusher*. The bronze sculpture by Gino Miles, was erected in 1987 and is dedicated to the workers who labor in the vineyards.”

**Action 1: Send County Delegation to NAPA to see how the wine industry has had a positive impact on that region.**

**Action 2: Adopt a mixed beverage referendum allowing wine sales throughout the county.**

**Quality of Life Strategy Two: Expand parks and recreation and preserve green space.**

**Action 1: Begin working with land trust organizations, vineyards, and others to develop an open space and greenways plan for the County.**

Outdoor recreation is an important factor impacting the location decisions of young professionals. With today's technological infrastructure, skilled workers are more flexible in where they live, no longer as tied to the location of a major employer. Connecting Yadkin County's greenways will create a quality of life amenity that is marketable to a younger population.

Successful programs have used "rails to trails", floodways, electric transmission and other utility easements as opportunities for potential trails.

*Funding: Funding should come from partnering cities and counties, but this effort is most successful as a private initiative. Models to examine include the Land & Greenspace Initiative of the Austin-San Antonio Corridor Council,*

*Timing: Full regional connectivity of greenways could take up to more than 20 years to complete. This is a long-term initiative but planning should begin now.*

**Action 2: Organize and attract major regional and national sporting events.**

- Sporting events will attract young people to Yadkin County and expose Yadkin County to a national audience.
- Support the creation of a Northwest North Carolina Sports Promotion Agency. A similar organization exists within the Triad Partnership, but this entity could be expanded with a fiduciary role to fund certain strategies. This agency would coordinate marketing efforts aimed at bringing regional and national sporting events to Yadkin County. The agency would also be responsible for providing each county and city with guidance on developing its own sporting venues.
- Work with local bicycle shop owners and neighboring counties to organize a road or mountain bike race.

*Funding: TBD (funding sources could include user taxes as well as foundation funding)*

*Timing: Planning should begin immediately.*

**Action 3: Include Yadkin County's parks and recreational amenities as part of a larger regional marketing packaged aimed at attracting vacationing outdoor enthusiasts.**

- Support the creation of a Northwest North Carolina Sports Promotion Agency.
- Participate with this organization or another similar organization to ensure that Yadkin County events are part of a regional promotion package.
- Consider getting buy-in from vintners who will receive significant benefit from this type of promotional package.

### **Quality of Life Strategy Three: Become nationally known as a center for fine craft and design.**

Northwest North Carolina's rich tradition in fine craft, arts, and design is what truly differentiates Yadkin County from other communities. Each county in the Region has a role to play in ensuring that the Region becomes nationally recognized for its abundant cultural amenities. This is, in part, a function of marketing. It is also a function of rallying the community around a few, specific projects that will unite the county and region's artistic resources and form a beacon for fine craft and arts enthusiasts around the world.

The activities recommended here will improve the quality of life for all residents by enhancing local arts and cultural amenities. At the same time, these activities will result in attracting higher end tourists - executives and their families who will come to Yadkin County as tourists, recognize the value and beauty of Yadkin County as a business location, and place Yadkin County on their list of future site locations.

As Yadkin County's Marketing Strategy suggests, each county has a role to play in the overall regional messaging whether it be arts and crafts festivals, wine festivals, extreme sport events, art exhibitions, or bake sales.

#### **Action 1: Recognize local artists and artistic ventures as economic development prospects.**

- Art schools, artists, and skilled crafts workers are each their own engines of economic development and entrepreneurship.
- Invite local artists and organizations to become a part of community organizations, such as Downtown / Main Street organizations, economic development boards, Chambers of Commerce, or Convention and Tourist Boards. Their creativity will add spark to event planning and marketing efforts.
- Chambers of Commerce and other community organizations should organize a series of evening workshops designed to teach Yadkin County residents about fine craft. Invite local artists and organizations to be guest lecturers at the workshops. These events should cover topics about the history of fine craft in Yadkin County, introduce the fine craft marketplace, and show residents examples of fine craft products developed in Yadkin County.

*Funding: No cost. Activities are organized by volunteers.*

*Timing: Immediately*

**Action 4: Support a virtual arts market for arts and crafts created in the Greater Winston area. (See Strategy under Entrepreneurship Section in Regional Strategy)**

**Quality of Life Strategy Four: Invest in the redevelopment and beautification of Downtowns**

Active, beautiful downtowns are an essential quality of successful economies. They provide a space in which locals can convene, create an immediate, visual impression of the health of the local economy, and draw in tourists.

**Action 1: Develop Master Plan for Downtowns**

- Seek funding for master plan development
- Obtain professional expertise from nationally recognized Landscape Architect and/or Urban Designer

Funding: \$75,000 (EDA, State of NC)

Timeline: Begin immediately

**Action 2: Incentivize business growth in CBDs**

- Develop and adopt specialized incentives that assist existing and future retail, commercial and office business downtown (see Resource Section).
- Reduce permitting fees (or eliminate) for businesses downtown
- Invest in wireless infrastructure downtown

Funding: \$NA

Timeline: Begin immediately

**Action 3: Encourage residential development in downtowns**

- Allow mixed-use development in all city and county zoning ordinances

Funding: \$NA

Timeline: Begin immediately

**Action 4: Improve Downtown Signage**

- Adopt and enforce strict billboard control ordinances – limiting size, increasing distance between billboards
- Develop thematic and uniform city signage in downtowns that goes with County and City marketing theme.
- Develop sign ordinance for downtowns that promotes signage that is similar in scale.

Funding: \$NA

Timeline: Begin immediately

**Action 6: Develop Downtown Tourism Amenities**

- Develop 1-2 kiosks (linked to wireless Internet access and tourism promotion), downtown walking tours, specific tourist attractions (with artistic attractions), maps, and other visitor amenities such as benches.

Funding: \$TBD

Timeline: Begin immediately

**Quality of Life Strategy Five: Support / expand healthcare facilities.**

**Action 1: Increase the number of specialty healthcare providers available in the county.**

This is especially important to the more rural counties, such as Ashe and Yadkin Counties, whose population of retirees is growing, but specialty health care services are located 1-2 hours away.

- Market the need to specialty care providers.
- Provide tourist packages to specialty care providers in urban markets to come to Yadkin County.

*Funding:* \$NA  
*Timeline:* Begin immediately

**Action 2: Promote Alternative healthcare**

The popularity of alternative health care is on the rise and is appealing to young, creative workers. It fits well with the quality environment in the mountain counties, as well as with target industries of tourism and value added agriculture.

- Facilitate a discussion with those individuals in the County currently operating a business of homeopathic medicine, growing alternative medicines (eg., galax leaves, ginger, Queen Anne Lace)

*Funding:* \$NA  
*Timeline:* Begin immediately

## **SITES AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES**

**GOAL: Yadkin County's sites and infrastructure meet the needs of target industries and a growing population.**

When firms are queried as to which factors are musts when selecting a state or region while making location decisions, labor and education considerations are often the most important, followed by proximity to markets, operating cost environment, and residential amenities for managers and engineers. The only infrastructure that is often mentioned in a regional context is transportation.

When choosing a specific development location within a state or region, however, the availability of infrastructure grows in importance. As infrastructure is available in almost every city, business prospects will compare the availability and pricing of sites that come fully equipped with utility infrastructure and roadways. The availability of a shovel ready site allows a company to move quickly into the community, saving time and energy. It also indicates that the community is business friendly and forward thinking.

The reason for the apparent contradiction in the importance of regional infrastructure versus specific sites is that most larger areas such as regions or states possess sufficient infrastructure somewhere, so it is not a major corporate consideration until after the general location is picked. Therefore, although not the top priority to get a company to choose a region, once they have chosen the NWNC region, it is imperative that adequate infrastructure - water, sewers, bridges, streets and mass transit – be available to support business growth and development – and that this infrastructure fair competitively with that of another region.

Several counties in the Region (Stokes, Rockingham) have several sites available for business, while others such as Forsyth, Yadkin and Alleghany are limited in their available sites. This is another area where there is a significant disparity among the NWNC counties – and potential opportunities for collaboration. Additionally, several projects can foster a regional economic impact. These include transportation projects as well as multi-jurisdictional projects – taking advantage of new legislation that the State of North Carolina has given counties. All infrastructure projects should follow the policies of cities and counties that have been developed in comprehensive plans for these counties. For example, the *Legacy Plan* for Forsyth County clearly indicates a need to reduce sprawl. Therefore, infrastructure should be planned and developed so that development is directed to growth areas identified in the Yadkin County Land Use Plan.

We are offering one major strategy for improving Yadkin County's infrastructure:

- **Provide Utility Infrastructure to the Intersection of Hwy 421/I77**

Detailed activities to support these strategies are provided in the following section.

**Sites and Infrastructure Strategy One: Provide Utility Infrastructure to the intersection of Hwy 421 and I-77**

This intersection is a very visible and potentially lucrative intersection, but no water or wastewater utility infrastructure currently exists to this site. Yadkin County, along with other municipalities, has undertaken a preliminary engineering study to determine feasibility and cost. If infrastructure were available to this site, private development could impact several counties in the region, creating job opportunities and increasing sales and property tax revenues. In addition to the utility needs, some additional assistance with modifications of the road interchanges to support the business growth may also be necessary, but these needs are not yet identified.

*Funding:* \$5million. *Potential funding source include:* EPA, USDA, EDA, Golden Leaf, Private Sector Investment, NCDOC, Foundations

*Timing:* 2005

*Although the Hwy 421/I-77 intersection has the most potential for development, other sites leading from Jonesville to this intersection may also benefit from infrastructure assistance. Please consider the following supplemental recommendation:*

- Reavis Road Interchange - Located just west of Yadkinville on US 421, first interchange out of town. Water and sewer service are close to this site, but the topography provides unique challenges to provide infrastructure. *Estimates are \$1 million.*
- US 601 South - Extending water from the city limits south to Courtney Crossing, there is small area of industry along the road with several additional sites available. Sewer is in the area but water is needed to encourage further development. *Estimates are \$1.6 million.*
- Boonville Water Main - extend water to Boonville from Jonesville to allow Boonville to have a better, more reliable supply of water which is a necessity for economic development (Boonville is presently on wells). *Estimates are \$1.7 million.*

*Also consider developing a Regional Business or Industrial Park at this location by utilizing recent legislation provided to municipalities. The North Carolina Legislature recently gave municipalities the authority to enter into join financing using interlocal agreements for business or industrial parks. The Region should look for opportunities to utilize this new tool, regardless of the benefit of the Tier structure.*

## **MARKETING STRATEGIES**

**GOAL: Yadkin County is engaged in a proactive, targeted marketing campaign to send a clear message that the county is dedicated to these goals and the importance of these strategies to improving the economy.**

In this fierce time of corporate and economic development competition, winning marketers create a strong brand, communicate a unique message, and commit to a targeted marketing plan that leverages technology. In order for Yadkin County to enhance its prospects for economic growth, a more proactive targeted marketing campaign is required.

Communities benefit from a well-orchestrated marketing strategy that is managed by a single organization and well-integrated team, in this case, the Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce (YCC). Before marketing, a community needs a marketing strategy to guide efforts. First and foremost, communities need to market internally. Internal marketing informs citizens and business leaders of the economic development vision and trains individuals to promote the community with a single message, rather than numerous confusing messages. Internal marketing builds local awareness and buy-in so that when a community markets outside of its region, it has a strong team to get the message out. The use of local media and personal meetings are good avenues for “building local awareness.” With strong internal support, the chances of successful external marketing increase considerably.

Once a community succeeds with internal marketing efforts, it should incorporate external marketing activities aimed at recruiting targeted businesses outside of the region. External marketing, for most communities, should begin one to two years after internal efforts are complete. Then, the trick is to balance both internal and external activities to get the most return – awareness and business. External marketing is vital to diversifying an economy. It can make huge impacts on a community by attracting high quality development, diversifying the tax base, providing more jobs, and creating more quality of life amenities for citizens. For communities today, it is important to have a Web site as primary collateral and to also have material to distribute at conferences and meetings. An integrated approach to external marketing that includes the right frequency of word-of-mouth, publicity, and personal meetings is the key to successful marketing.

## Review of Existing Marketing Efforts

Yadkin County has minimum efforts dedicated to promoting the County to businesses outside of the community. The organizations that do market to external audiences include Yadkin Chamber of Commerce and Piedmont Triad Partnership.



The Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce has a Web site for marketing to new companies and local businesses. There is helpful information on the site, but the

layout, organization, and content could be improved and updated more often. The Piedmont Triad Partnership markets 12 counties, including Yadkin. This is an asset to external marketing efforts, however the one-page datasheet on Yadkin can be more targeted to the newly identified industries. Yadkin County economic development leaders can provide the Partnership with specific messaging to use when promoting the community.

One of biggest attributes in external marketing is the county's name, Yadkin. Many individuals and businesses outside of the area have heard of Yadkin Valley. This name recognition will help build economic development awareness.

An extremely valuable marketing tool is publicity, specifically targeting a growing industry prospective business. However, the most recent article AE found on the County was over a year ago. One of the best articles was the one discussing the County's expansion into the wine industry, and the American Viticultural Area getting approval. This is a great awareness activity and should continue.

Yadkin County has some internal marketing for economic development in place, but has an opportunity to build upon this. For instance, target industries should be communicated to all residents through community-wide campaigns. The goal should be to create buy-in and excitement.

The County and Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce provide majority of marketing communication to residents and local businesses. Yadkin County's Web site, <http://www.yadkincounty.gov/>, is functional and focuses on County meetings and the Commissioners. The County can use this vehicle to convey the economic development vision and strategy to the community so that they become supporter and promoters. The current tagline "Progress Through Past Experience" is one that many communities use and doesn't state the unique character of Yadkin. Incorporating a marketing theme and adding content that is valuable to the target industries can improve this site. Yadkin is a beautiful county with gorgeous rural scenes that are attractive and should be included in collateral. It is also important to present images of youth and energy.



Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce primarily uses an electronic newsletter to communicate to residents and local businesses. It includes information on events and economic development efforts. The Chamber can consider featuring local businesses and their success – this promotes local businesses and informs the community of industry and economic progress.

Yadkin Valley, publication focuses on the County and mainly provides updates on local residents and in a vehicle for businesses to advertise. This is a good source for visitors who want to travel throughout the valley.

Overall, with a small budget for economic development marketing, Yadkin County has minimal collateral and efforts dedicated to marketing. Great marketing can be done on a low budget if done creatively. However, the County does need more financial support if it wants to get on the radar screen of tourists and businesses. Each organization should make sure contact information is easily available, link to each other's Web site, and agree to a consistent marketing message.

### Marketing Strategies

The remaining section provides a description and Actions necessary for Yadkin County to engage in a targeted marketing plan, beginning with internal marketing, external activities, and readjusting the plan.

There are seven recommended strategies, including:

- 1. Establish a lead economic development organization and commit to a marketing strategy**
- 2. Brand the region and each county**
- 3. Better understand the needs of the target audiences**
- 4. Gain local media support**
- 5. Launch internal marketing campaign**
- 6. Implement external marketing campaign**
- 7. Measure and readjust the plan**

AE is providing a Marketing Guide (MG) that contains information to assist the Northwest North Carolina region and each county in implementing the economic development strategies over the next five years. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the NWNC Economic Development Strategic Report and specifically to support leaders who will execute the marketing campaigns.

**Marketing Strategy One: Establish a lead economic development organization and commit to marketing strategy**

In the past, Yadkin County has had good efforts towards economic development marketing, but it can be improved. Today, leaders recognize the importance of having a unified plan, led by one economic development organization, to retain and welcome appropriate types of businesses. The County needs to commit to a long-term vision and marketing strategy to shape its economic future. Although several local organizations have been charged with various elements of marketing, no single body is responsible for overseeing activities. Yadkin County Chamber of Commerce (YCC) should be Yadkin County's primary economic development organization leading marketing efforts. All other economic development entities should participate and support a unified message. YCC will need to obtain \$32,500 funding for implementation of this marketing plan during the first year. By year three, the county should double its marketing budget.

*Yadkin County's marketing strategy is to improve awareness within the county of economic development benefits and to turn citizens into promoters who will endorse the great attributes of living and doing business in Yadkin to external target industry businesses through the right combination of publicity, direct marketing, and promotional collateral.*

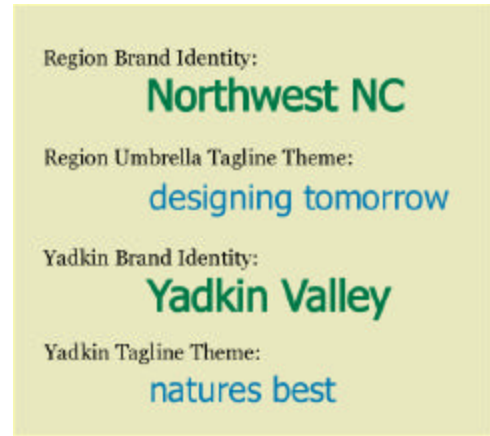
**Action 1: Local economic development leaders should agree on YCC being the lead organization to implement marketing.**

**Action 2: YCC and other local economic development leaders should approve the marketing strategy.**

**Marketing Strategy Two: Brand the county**

Communities that establish a marketing theme that differentiates, have greater chances of attracting economic growth. Yadkin County is marketing to change the perception within the county and build national awareness. The Yadkin Valley name has begun to generate positive awareness within the state and the county economic development leaders should build upon this name.

A brand theme conveys “who”, “where” or “what” the county offers. Local leaders feel that the most marketable attribute of Yadkin County is “the natural rural beauty, agriculture, and creativeness.” As a phase, “natures best,” reflects the most unique aspect of Yadkin. With Agriculture being a recommended target industry that builds off the economy and “nature” being a key descriptor of Yadkin Valley, it is the most appropriate position to communicate. Marketing should establish awareness of Yadkin County as a rural community with a tradition of producing agriculture and more recently award-winning wine. Yadkin Valley is the identity (name).



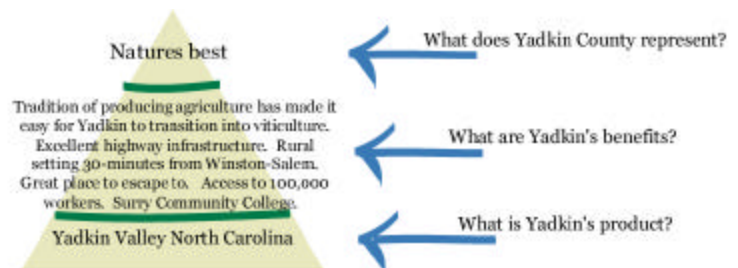
The proposed theme is meant for economic development leaders to use when developing the logo and a marketing message to use in communication.

The three essences, or positives attributes, that best describe Yadkin County are:

- **Natural** - Plentiful land and beauty rural settings
- **Wine** - Growing sector of the agricultural industry – Yadkin Valley was named an American Viticultural Area
- **Growing** - Economy is changing and focusing on new industries with growth

A mission statement says “*Who Yadkin is today.*” AE views Yadkin County’s economic development mission to be, “*To nurture business by leveraging our strengths in location, agriculture, and workforce development.*”

To stand out compared to competitors, Yadkin County should communicate a primary message centered on a unique quality of the community. The community is “*natures best.*” Yadkin should build upon its unique assets, such as its scenic setting and environment to cultivate smart business growth. A positioning pyramid is a technique used to determine the message. It answers three questions and is the foundation of all future promotional activities, although the idea or words themselves might not be specifically stated in marketing materials.



**Action 1: YCC and other economic development organizations should discuss and approve a county theme.**

**Action 2: Local economic development organizations should agree on using a consistent message to promote the county to local businesses, tourists, and new businesses.**

**Action 3: YCC should hire an advertising firm to develop a logo.**

**Action 4: All economic development organizations should revamp marketing collateral to convey this primary message.**

### **Marketing Strategy Three: Better understand the needs of the target audiences**

Understanding how Yadkin County satisfies the needs of each target audience will help economic development leaders craft the secondary message for marketing communication. A secondary message occurs after initial inquiry and provides more valuable information.

First, **understand the needs of internal audiences and inform them of the county's economic development vision.** Local employers, the current workforce, influencers, and entrepreneurs are an important aspect to economic development. Recognizing these segments as a target audience and understanding their needs, is sometimes overlooked. For instance, entrepreneurs residing within the county desire information on how to start a business. This audience also prefers to stay in its "home" location. Economic development marketing should communicate that Yadkin County is less costly, has a strong workforce, and balance to life and work. The YCC should improve relationships with local businesses and provide additional services that can help them be more successful. The use of local media and personal meetings are good avenues for building awareness and demand for economic development services.

Once the county succeeds with addressing internal audiences' needs, it **should become familiar with targeted industry businesses, external audiences.** Identify target industry champions, who are business leaders that have expert knowledge of a particular industry. These champions understand industry players, trends, challenges and opportunities. These individuals have powerful connections within an industry and are willing to be called on to meet with site selectors, volunteer to speak at events promoting the county, and share industry knowledge with economic development leaders. The county should have at least three industry champions for each target industry. The MG list industry associations that can be a resource on target industry trends and prospects. The target audiences include: logistics and distribution, hospitality and tourism, design, transportation equipment, value-added agriculture, food processing, and materials.

Yadkin County should use the targeted messaging in the MG and the main "proof points" in this section when crafting secondary messaging for marketing communication.

Yadkin County can use these selling points in secondary marketing messaging:

- Rural region with a strong agricultural tradition
- Home to many unique, talented artists
- Close proximity to a major U.S. markets

- Surry Community College educational programs to support target industry businesses
- Beautiful natural resources – Wine country (Over 44 million people visited the state in 2002, making North Carolina the sixth most visited state in the country)
- Entrepreneur-minded individuals
- 25-minutes from Winston-Salem (urban area)
- Plentiful land and building space

**Action 1: The YCC and other local economic development leaders should get familiar with the characteristics and needs of each target audience.**

**Action 2: Continue to revamp marketing communication with targeted message.**

**Action 3: Identify target industry champions.**

**Action 4: Become industry experts.**

### **Marketing Strategy Four: Gain local media support**

**Yadkin County needs media champions to gain support of all local news companies.** Local newspapers, radio stations, company newsletters, and Web sites are good tools for communicating information about the economic development initiative to residents. It is imperative that local media companies speak positively about the county and provide coverage. What local news publishes, directly impacts citizen's views and commitment. Yadkin Ripple, Winston Salem Journal, and Yadkin Valley publication should continue support county economic development by publishing informative, positive stories. Accomplishing the strategy requires publicity that educates and creates excitement within Yadkin County. Private and public leaders should regularly meet with the media and provide updates on economic development successes. The local media is the first avenue for "building the local buzz."

An excellent example of the local media supporting economic development is, The Mountain Times in Ashe County. The Mountain Times just announced that it is going to dedicate a weekly section of its paper to informing citizens on small business and entrepreneurial resources and successes. It will provide information on resources, such as Wilkes Community College, that can assist local businesses. This type of initiative can also benefit Yadkin County.

**Action 1: YCC and the Implementer Committee should identify local media champions that can assist with persuading the local media to communicate economic development stories to the public.**

**Action 2: Local media champions should assist the county with writing and distributing press announcements to local news companies.**

**Action 3: Local media companies should publish stories on economic development.**

### **Marketing Strategy Five: Launch internal marketing campaign**

**Yadkin County needs to market internally.** Internal marketing informs citizens and business leaders of the economic development vision and trains individuals to promote the county with a single message, rather than numerous confusing messages. Internal marketing builds local awareness and buy-in so that when a community markets outside of its region, it has a strong team to get the message out. With strong internal support, the chances of successful recruitment increase considerably. For many communities, internal marketing take a year or two to accomplish.

Internal marketing activities should be launched during a roll out event. At a local rollout event, Yadkin County should announce its three major goals:

- Improve infrastructure Hwy. 421 and I-77
- Improve K-12 facilities
- Expand Surry Community College programs

Publicity, promotion, and collateral are the three vehicles recommended to reach Yadkin County's internal audience. The goal is to build awareness among each target audience in a cost effective and quick manner.

**Publicity is one of the best vehicle to cost effectively reach Yadkin County's internal audience and generate a buzz.** By distributing press announcements and persuading news companies to "pick-up" a story, Yadkin County can gain more publicity and improve its image. The county economic development on-line newsletter should be updated at least once a quarter, if not monthly. Promote the newsletter to local businesses and citizens so that they use this source to get information. Other ways to communicate to the public include: posting news in church bulletins, high school papers, regional business journals, bylined articles, and community Web sites. Topics to consider including in the county newsletter that will inform residents and create awareness about: How to promote the county, Planning for our youths' careers, Why diversifying an economy is a good thing, and Growing entrepreneurs.

Promotion includes spreading information by word-of-mouth, attending regional industry events with local businesses, speaking at business networking events with key influencers, forming relationships with regional E.D. teams to sell Yadkin County, and calling prospects to provide information on why do business in Yadkin County, available business park space, and the benefits of operating a business in the county. Some regional organization events to consider attending include North Carolina Textile Manufacturing Association, North Carolina Arts Council, and the Western North Carolina Film Commission.

The primary economic development collateral piece should be the newly launched YCC Web site. By continuing to update the Web site to contain the new marketing message, this will be a strong piece to reach both internal and external audiences. Yadkin County should ask local businesses to mention this Web site to employees, on local businesses Intranet, and in their corporate material when appropriate.

**Action 1: YCC and other economic development organizations approve the internal marketing plan.**

**Action 2: YCC should ask for volunteers to assist with implementation.**

**Action 3: Individuals from the community with a passion for economic development and marketing should volunteer and become apart of the marketing team.**

*Reference the MG for more detailed recommendations including Web site layout and content and PR headlines and distribution vehicles.*

**During the first year of receiving this plan, the YCC should implement activities that increase local awareness.**

### **Internal Activities**

1. Develop a publicity campaign
  - What economic development is, why it's important, and how to market the County. *Budget: \$8,000 a year to hiring a PR firm.*
  - Discuss powerful topics in newsletter and on Web site. *See MG.*
  - Negotiate with the local newspaper to get a weekly section dedicated to economic development. For instance, 50 words on important economic development topics.
  - Implement a utility billing campaign. E.g. Use this to announce special projects, successes, and news Web links.
2. Revamp primary ED Web site. *Budget: Hire Web design firm \$12,000*
3. Develop a Recruitment Ready Team  
*YCC and each ED organization should create a standard protocol for managing prospects*
4. Speak at local business associations and provide updates on Yadkin County's economic development and marketing efforts
5. Develop collateral to distribute during personal meetings with local business leaders
6. Create a youth entrepreneurship group  
*To better connect youths and assist them with starting companies locally*  
*Ask TEI to be on the board of this newly formed group*  
*Consider calling the group "E-power"*

### **Marketing Strategy Six: Develop and implement external marketing campaign**

External marketing promotes Yadkin County to identified targeted industry business whom complement the current economy and help Yadkin County meet its economic development vision. Most likely for Yadkin County, external marketing campaigns will begin in 2006.

Web sites, publicity, and targeted direct marketing are the most cost effective for communities to “get their message out.” Yadkin County should balance these activities, be consistent in the message it conveys, and focus on campaigns that will directly reach prospects. The primary vehicle and one that should be used throughout external efforts is publicity. Then, Yadkin should begin to incorporate collateral (Web site and brochure), marketing missions, and industry associations & conferences.

An example of a campaign to grow tourism is targeting travel agents in South Carolina and Virginia with an electronic promotion. Book “X” vacations to Davie, Rockingham, or Yadkin and win a 5-day trip for yourself and a companion. Try to reach the end consumer by getting an article in the Northeast circulation of Travel + Leisure publication. It’s expensive, but is wonderful to building an image as a “tourist destination.”

#### **Publicity**

Publicity may be the most effective form of economic development promotion. Yadkin County could significantly increase the amount of publicity the city receives in publications, and ultimately reach the city’s target industry companies by having a PR firm on retainer or a PR Manager to develop and distribute releases and bylined articles.

#### **Collateral (Web site and Brochures)**

Resources should be invested in redeveloping the primary Web site that promote economic development in Yadkin County and better linking content on regional economic development Web sites. The county’s main economic development organization’s URL and phone number should be incorporated in every activity that promotes Yadkin County.

#### **Marketing Missions**

Yadkin County leaders need to engage in marketing missions to recruit target industry companies from other regions and to see first hand benchmark communities efforts. Schedule marketing missions each year to a region with a high concentration of its target industries and to benchmark cities to view first hand what is working and not working in their business community. Volunteer representatives from business, government, and academia should attend marketing missions. The missions should involve a series of meetings with local companies to sell Yadkin County’s great location for business. For example, visit regional neighbor benchmark cities such as Charlotte, NC and Greenville, SC. In the second year, consider visiting national such as Chattanooga, TX and Napa Valley, CA.

#### **Industry Associations and Conferences**

Industry associations offer the opportunity to learn and track trends and they are also a trusted source of information for member companies, prospects. Yadkin County should consider joining top associations of its target industries. Place

articles in industry association newsletters and sponsor two industry conferences per year to get face time with prospects. Face-to-face marketing is recommended to supplement other marketing efforts. Yadkin can attend, sponsor, and exhibit at conferences.

**Action 1: YCC and other economic developments organizations approve external marketing plan**

**Action 2: YCC should approve local campaigns and ask for volunteers to assist with implementation.**

**Action 3: Individuals from the community with a passion for economic development and marketing should volunteer and become apart of the marketing team.**

*Reference the MG for more information on these vehicles.*

Yadkin County should consider implementing activities that increase awareness for the county with external audiences.

### **External Activities**

1. Publicity campaign to target national publications. *Budget \$5,000 - 15,000*
2. Take marketing missions to markets with heavy concentrations of industry prospects. *Budget: \$2,000 per person, per mission*
3. Obtain target business database and send electronic campaign mail
4. Develop collateral (annual report) piece. *Budget \$5,000 - 10,000*
5. Sponsor industry conferences and spend face time with prospects. *Budget: \$2,000 per conference*

### **Marketing Strategy Seven: Measure and improve plan**

In the long term, a successful marketing initiative will result in an increase in the number and quality of companies expanding and starting operations in Yadkin County. The economic development leaders should establish metrics to monitor the success of its marketing activities. These numbers should be calculated at least twice a year to assess whether Yadkin County's identity is better recognized at a local, regional, and state level. Performance measures are included in the regional report (Metrics) to provide guidelines for progress made on this goal.

Initially and each year, YCC needs community leaders to volunteer. Volunteers from the public, private, media, and academia (Implementation Team) should help implement this plan. Volunteers will donate time and participate in business development, public relations, and marketing missions. Some of these activities will require volunteers to make personal investment. For instance, 20 or more individuals should take a mission

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each year to a benchmark and be willing to pay for their accommodations. Budget figures are included in the regional report (Table of Strategies, Funding, Timing, and Responsibility) to provide guidelines for progress made on this goal.

Appendix 1:  
**Performance Metrics**

## Performance Metrics

An important component of the implementation of the Northwest North Carolina Strategic Plan is a monitoring system to track regional performance in the future.

AngelouEconomics has identified several data sets that have been used during the strategic planning process that we believe will be good measures of economic performance. These data are easily found at state and national sources, are available at the county level, and should be considered good indicators of the overall economic health of the community and its citizens.

Many state and local economic development organizations already use performance metrics. These data are also called “benchmarks,” as local data is usually placed side-by-side state or national data for comparison. By committing to measuring its achievements, NWNC will be joining the ranks of communities in Oregon, North Carolina, Minnesota, and Indiana who have developed successful benchmarking systems to monitor their economic performance. The performance metrics proposed in this plan provides NWNC leadership an excellent opportunity to demonstrate positive results of their efforts and policies and build confidence among the general public that the economy is heading in the right direction.

AngelouEconomics has identified several performance metrics for each recommendation area of this plan that could be used by county leaders to track progress:

### **Workforce Development**

- Job growth in non-manufacturing industries
- Average wage growth
- Unemployment rate
- SAT scores
- Educational attainment
- Drop out rates

### **Entrepreneurship**

- Net firm creation
- Venture capital inflows
- Membership in entrepreneurs associations

### **Infrastructure & Sites**

- Existence of business parks and sites
- Available developable acreage (with utility service)
- Commuter congestion
- Office and industrial vacancy rates

### **Quality of Life**

- Percent of population in the 25-34 age group
- Net migration of new people to the county/region
- Poverty rate
- Per capita income
- Parkland acreage per capita

### **Marketing**

- State or national media mentions relating to economic development

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- Prospect activity (info requests or visits)
- Tourism revenues

Each county may choose some or all of these metrics, and may have additional metrics that fit well with the county's goals. AngelouEconomics recommends that performance be measured on a county-by-county basis and that each metric is benchmarked against the U.S. where possible (or to North Carolina if not). Metrics are best used when they are calculated as a share of the U.S. average. For example: Forsyth County's average wage is currently \$31,700 (2002), or 93% of the U.S. average. Forsyth can then set goals to bridge the gap over time with the U.S.

Performance metrics work best when they are easily updated on an annual basis, are easy to understand by the general public, and are measures of results not activity (such as measuring marketing calls or conference visits).

Most of this data can be easily found online at the North Carolina LINC system website: <http://linc.state.nc.us/> This site is extremely comprehensive and monitors hundreds of social, economic, and political progress measures. Most data, but not all, is available on an annual basis.

AngelouEconomics recommends that NWC counties identify the set of benchmarks that they will track, set goals for when the county will reach parity with U.S. levels, and monitor their progress. We provide an example table with actual benchmark data that can be used to start this discussion:

### Potential Performance Metrics Yadkin County

	Job growth (CAGR) 2000-02	Non-mftg job growth (CAGR) 2000-02	Average Wage 2002	Unemploy- ment Rate 2002	Poverty Rate 2000	Per Capita Income 2001
<b>Yadkin County</b>	-4.6%	2.2%	\$29,028	5.8%	10.0%	\$22,291
<b>North Carolina</b>	-1.3%	0.2%	\$32,696	6.8%	12.3%	\$27,308
<b>United States</b>	-0.6%	0.7%	\$36,744	5.8%	12.4%	\$30,413
<b>Yadkin as % of U.S.</b>	0.0%	305.7%	79.0%	100.4%	80.6%	73.3%
<b>Yadkin Target Benchmarks as a Percent of U.S.</b>						
1997			82%	56%	--	83%
2000	107%		76%	84%	81%	76%
2002	0%		79%	100%	--	73%
2007	50%		83%	95%	--	76%
2012	100%		87%	91%	78%	80%
2017	110%		91%	86%	--	85%
2022	120%		96%	82%	75%	90%

